



Teacher Confessions: I Used to be a Classroom Teacher; Now, I'm a School Teacher

By Educator Barnes – February 24, 2020

I want to be the best. Being the best takes time, energy, and effort. During the early part of my career, I put most of my time, energy, and effort into myself and my classroom. I did not care much about what was happening in anyone else's classroom. Those classrooms had their own teachers. Those teachers were getting paid and had the same expectations as I did. I believed I did not need to worry about any other room, but my own. I was wrong.

Teaching is hard as hell. Anyone who says otherwise is lying. It can be mentally taxing and completing all the necessary tasks encroaches on a teacher's personal time. I used these justifications for not worrying about anyone else. For the majority of my career, I have worked

in a secondary setting. My students were also someone else's students. Choosing to only be concerned with what was happening within my four walls was not helpful.

Although I believe relationship building is the responsibility of all teachers, giving colleagues some tips about students really would not take up much of my time. It also had a ripple effect. If my colleagues had fewer problems with students I shared with them, it made my day with those students easier. They would not be sitting in the in school suspension room instead of coming to my class, or if they were coming to my class, they would arrive calm.

It's more than behavior. Sharing any expertise or knowledge is helpful. The mentality teachers must have is that we are all in this together. Teachers can't just be classroom teachers; they must also be school teachers. All of the students are the responsibility of all of the adults in the building. Once I understood this, I knew it was important to not only do well but to also support my colleagues and any students even if those students were not in my class.

Some students need a person to check-in with that is not their teacher. I became that person for some students. Some colleagues need a safe space, a person they could trust to unload to and not worry about their fears and anxieties ending up in the rumor mill. I became that person for some colleagues. My fear of not being able to be the best teacher I could be if I focused on what was happening outside of my classroom was unfounded. Why keep my impact inside of the four walls of my classroom when I can make an impact across the entire school?